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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 05 USNATO 000130

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SUBJECT: READOUT OF NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL MEETING - APRIL
9, 2008

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Classified By: Charge Walter S. Reid for reasons 4.1 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary from the NAC Meeting:

-- Afghanistan: The NATO IS was tasked to lay out how ISAF,s & internal plan8 agreed at Bucharest will be implemented. Chairman of the Military Committee (CMC) General Henault announced the opening of a Border Coordination Center in Nangarhar. SHAPE anticipated a gradual increase in the presence of enemy fighters and attacks over the 2008 fighting season. The Canadian PermRep called for a discussion on reconciliation issues in Afghanistan. The UK PermRep said poppy eradication was off to a slower start this year compared to last, though the GIROA had targeted some formerly & untouchable8 high-level targets this year. Lithuania announced a 50,000-euro contribution to ISAF,s Post Operations Humanitarian Relief Fund, and Denmark requested a tally from NATO of new ISAF force offers at Bucharest, and the resulting status of the Combined Joint Statement of Requirements (CJSOR).

-- Balkans: Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer highlighted the urgency of UNMIK-EU coordination following adoption of Kosovo Constitution, and stated that he will discuss and issue an Initiating Directive to allow national military authorities to develop a revised Balkans Operational Plan.

-- Africa) Support to the AU: SYG informed Council about his meeting with AU Commissioner Jean Ping when they discussed AU,s request for NATO,s assistance to the African Standby Force.

-- Iraq: The SYG reminded PermReps of PM Maliki's visit to NATO next week, in which he will give his assessment of the NATO Training Mission-Iraq (NTM-I) and his perspective on the future of Iraq's engagement with NATO. The CMC noted that during the last two weeks, there has been a significant increase in the number of attacks on Coalition Forces in

Baghdad in reaction to the GOI operations in Basra.

-- CMX '08: The Director of NATO's Crisis Exercising and Management System briefed the NAC on the NATO Crisis Management Exercise 2008 (CMX-08), NATO's annual political-military exercise involving NATO Headquarters (IS/IMS), ACO, ACT, and the 26 allied capitals. UNDPKO, UNOCHA, UNHCR, OSCE, and EU have been invited as observers.

-- Update on HQ Management Issues: The A/SYG for Executive Management (EM) briefed PermReps on a wide range of management issues currently under discussion in the Civil Budget Committee (CBC), including the fragile state of the current building's infrastructure, the ongoing "selective refit" aimed at improving public/visitor areas in the present building, the need for expanded space following the membership invitation issued to at least two new allies during the Bucharest Summit, the ongoing effort to revitalize the HQ information technology (IT) infrastructure, HQ reform and issues related to transitioning to a new NATO HQ building. Several nations weighed in on the budget implications these issues might have.

-- Statements on Political Subjects: The Italian Deputy PermRep provided a readout of recent discussions at the United Nations on peacekeeping operations.

-- AOB: DCM Olson remarked on the adoption of travel restrictions on Iranian officials due to Iran's continued violation of prior UNSC resolutions regarding nuclear proliferation.

END SUMMARY.

12. (C) Afghanistan: The SYG stated that now that Heads of

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State and Government had endorsed NATO's internal, classified & Comprehensive Strategic Political-Military Plan,⁸ he had tasked A/SYG for Operations Martin Howard with proposing a way ahead to implement the actions outlined in the plan. Howard will report to PermReps in short order.⁸ The SYG also looked forward to the April 16 NAC with UN SRSG Kai Eide, which will be in ISAF format.

13. (C) CMC General Henault briefed on the March 29 establishment of a Border Coordination Center (BCC) along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border at Camp Torkham, Nangarhar province, near the Khyber Pass. A second BCC is scheduled to be established near Lwara, Paktika province, in late summer. CMC Henault stated that ultimately there will be a total of six RC-E BCCs, three on the Afghanistan side of the border and three on the Pakistan side. Calling the BCCs a decisive step forward,⁸ and a tangible deliverable from the Tripartite Commission, he briefed that the intent of the BCCs is to establish, at the tactical level, a forum for the daily liaison and coordination between RC East, the ANSF, PAKMIL and the Pakistan Frontier Corps. BCCs will also work closely with the Joint Intelligence Operations Center at ISAF HQ, which is jointly manned by Afghan, Pakistani and ISAF personnel.

14. (S) SHAPE Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations MG Wright noted that the seasonal infiltration of hardcore fighters from Pakistan into Afghanistan is underway, though SHAPE intelligence assessments expect the movement to be more gradual than in years past. SHAPE anticipates the 2008 fighting season for Opposing Militant Forces (OMF) to begin slowly and gradually increase, with continued emphasis on small-scale direct and indirect attacks, and the use of large-scale operations exclusively against isolated, poorly protected District Centers and isolated, weak Afghan National Security Forces. In RC-S, it is assessed the OMF will attempt to expand their influence in Pashtun areas with low ISAF and ANSF presence, the Haqani network will continue to pose a threat in RC-E and seek to threaten RC-Capital, while

the OMF will seek to exploit opportunities in Pashtun pockets of RC-N and RC-W. On Pakistan, MG Wright noted that it is too early to judge the effect of the new government,s policies on ISAF and the PAKMIL, but current assessments indicate the government is moving away from the use of military force in the border regions, and that the Pakistani Taliban has taken a hard bargaining position in response to initial entreaties from the government for talks. MG Wright briefed that the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit has reached full operational capacity, and its first task will be to establish a company-sized FOB at Camp Rhino on the Kandahar-Helmand border by April 20.

¶5. (C) In the following discussion period, Canadian PermRep McRae, citing a recent update from the NATO SCR circulated to PermReps, stated he would like SCR Jochems to brief the NAC on the status of Afghan-led reconciliation efforts, to include National Front talks with the Taliban and the role of the PTS program. The SYG said he would pass along the message, as Jochems would brief the NAC via DVC in the coming weeks.

¶6. (C) UK PermRep Eldon gave a quick eradication update, citing that 6,000 hectares of poppy had been eradicated thus far, but that based on where we are in the growing season, which started later this year, eradication numbers are comparably worse thus far than they were in 2007. He noted reports of significant Governor-led eradication in Nangarhar and Kandahar provinces, but the UNODC has been unable to verify figures thus far. He did state that for the first time, ex-Helmand police chief Haji Abdul Rahman,s extensive fields were eradicated, costing him approximately 20% of his crop, and speculated that some of the recent attacks on the Poppy Eradication Force have resulted from the Afghan

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government finally breaking this &bubble of impunity8 around some key figures.

¶7. (C) Lithuanian PermRep Linkevicius announced a 50,000-euro contribution to ISAF,s Post Operations Humanitarian Relief Fund.

¶8. (C) Danish PermRep Poulsen-Hansen asked that the NATO International Military Staff and International Staff provide a consolidated summary of all ISAF force contributions made at Bucharest. The SYG admitted that tallying new contributions, versus old contributions simply confirmed at Bucharest, and which contributions applied to the CJSOR and which did not had been difficult, and CMC Henault stated that NATO military authorities were working on a consolidated list that would show new contributions, as well as the status of ISAF,s CJSOR post-Bucharest.

¶9. (C) Balkans: The SYG noted that Kosovo,s draft constitution, adopted by the constitutional commission in Pristina, was certified by International Civilian Representative Peter Feith on April 2 as in compliance with the Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo status settlement. Kosovo authorities signed the document which was now being considered by the Kosovo Assembly for its ratification with an entry into force scheduled for June 15. In this regard, the SYG stressed the urgency for ensuring adequate preparations for the upcoming transition between UNMIK and the EULEX Missions, a theme he underscored to U.N. SYG Ban-Ki Moon during their bilateral in Bucharest. The SYG also noted for the Council that ICTY,s not guilty verdict of the former Kosovo Prime Minister Haradinaj could have a potential impact on politics in Kosovo, particularly upon the return of the latter to Pristina. The SYG noted that the next meeting of the International Steering Group will take place in Vienna on April 17 and that DA/SYG for Operations, James Pardew, will represent NATO at this meeting. Lastly, the SYG informed the Council that he will issue the NAC Initiating Directive which will provide NATO,s national military authorities with the necessary guidance to develop the 3rd revision of the Balkans

Joint Operations Plan to be endorsed by the Military Committee and approved by the NAC no later than 90 days after the issuance of this directive. The SYG intends to first have an informal discussion on this directive with PermReps next week prior to seeking their approval.

¶10. (C) General Li Gobbi from IMS provided a situational update in Kosovo, informing that recent visits to Kosovo by Serbian politicians such as SRS leader, Tomislav Nikolic, have drawn large crowds in the Serbian enclaves, but so far have not incited violence. Likewise, the announcement of the Haradinaj verdict led to celebrations from Kosovo Albanians in the western region. KFOR continues to have an increased operational tempo and that the German ORF Battalion, having just completed operational rehearsals in Kosovo, will stay in Kosovo until the end of May, past the Serbian elections on May 11. On April 4, COMKFOR added the Courthouse in northern Mitrovica to the KFOR list of Properties Designated with Special Status (PrDSS) and, as a result, will enable COMKFOR to ensure that adequate protection is provided including designating an exclusion zone around the courthouse in the event of further violence. In response to a Polish question, Li Gobbi said that UNMIK continues to secure the courthouse, but KFOR maintains a visible presence.

¶11. (C/NF) Slovenia informed the Council of the results from the March 28-29 meeting of EU Foreign Ministers, which was notable for the attendance of Serbian Foreign Minister Jeremic and Kosovo Prime Minister Thaci. Belgium, highlighting the SYG,s concern regarding synchronization of the international actors on Kosovo, requested to know if it was possible for all three organizations -- UN, EU, and NATO -- to start having an intensified dialogue regarding the

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transition and, if so, how could that be accomplished. The UK, while supportive of the idea, cautioned that Allies need to think carefully beforehand in order to achieve what we want from the coordination. While Spain noted general support for the Belgian idea, and toward receiving the NAC Initiating Directive, the Spanish PermRep noted the importance of monitoring the debate in New York over UNMIK,s future. He then inquired as to KFOR,s role regarding a recent revision of planning for a KFOR fragmentary operational order (FRAGO) on deterring &civil disobedience,8 stating that the NAC needs to be kept informed of any change to KFOR,s mandate. General Li Gobbi responded by saying that KFOR has a role in support of this mission in accordance with its mandate and promised to keep NATO,s military authorities properly informed. The SYG concluded by responding to the Belgian proposal noting the difficulties of getting the three bodies together to discuss Kosovo, but that he hoped General DeKermabon would be able to brief the PSC next week on how the EULEX mission will transition into Kosovo. The SYG also highlighted that the emphasis on transition and any reconfiguration of UNMIK needs to be discussed in New York, and that currently there is no agreement on the Security Council regarding what course to follow.

¶12. (C) Africa) Support to the AU: SYG informed Council about his meeting Monday with AU Commissioner Jean Ping. Ping stressed the desire by the AU to deepen relations with NATO, and he reiterated the AU,s request for NATO,s assistance to the African Standby Force.

¶13. (C) Iraq: The SYG reminded PermReps of PM Maliki's visit to NATO next week, saying that the PM would give his assessment of the NATO Training Mission-Iraq (NTM-I), as well as his perspective on the future of Iraq's engagement with NATO.

¶14. (C) The CMC noted that during the last two weeks, there has been a significant increase in the number of attacks on Coalition Forces in Baghdad, especially in the Sadr City and New Baghdad neighborhoods, a reaction to the GOI operations

in Basra. Fifty-four of the attacks targeted facilities used, or frequented by NTM-I personnel. One NATO soldier - a Hungarian - was slightly injured during the attacks and returned to work the same day. These attacks have not had any impact on NTM-I training.

¶15. (C) CMX '08: Mr. Ilay Ferrier, Head, Crisis Exercising and Management System to briefed NAC on the NATO Crisis Management Exercise 2008 (CMX-08) to be held 16-22 April. CMX is an annual political-military exercise involving NATO Headquarters (IS/IMS), ACO, ACT, and the 26 allied capitals. NATO partners Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Croatia, Finland, Georgia, Ireland, Israel, Morocco, Sweden, Switzerland, Macedonia, and Ukraine are invited to participate. UNDPKO, UNOCHA, UNHCR, OSCE, and EU are invited as observers. The purpose of the exercise is to practice NATO,s Crisis Management procedures and to test NATO,s ability to respond to a developing crisis.

¶16. (SBU) The CMX-08 area of operations includes a fictitious island in the Indian Ocean. Key catalysts for possible NATO assistance / intervention include the breakdown of internal security, tensions with neighboring states, humanitarian and IDP problems, and an emerging CBR and terror threat to the international presence.

¶17. (SBU) As part of the exercise scenario, there will be a fictitious UN invitation to NATO to conduct non-Article 5 Crisis Response Operation under a UN mandate aimed at enhancing stability and regional security.

¶18. (C) France, commenting on the scenario, underlined that
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NATO could not deploy without an additional UNSCR and questioned the extensive list of partners planned for involvement in the exercise, including the incorporation on non-EAPC partners. (Note: the two new partners are from the Mediterranean Dialogue: Israel and Morocco. We presume France is alluding to a reluctance to include Israel in this exercise planning, even though France already agreed to all the partners, inclusion in earlier planning conferences. End Note.) The Netherlands suggested NATO,s mandate could be based on a more flexible foundation and asked whether the scenario addressed an invitation by the fictitious host country, which an exercise coordinator later confirmed the scenario would have the host country provide.

¶19. (C) Update on HQ Management Issues: The A/SYG for Executive Management (EM), Doug Dempster, briefed PermReps on a wide range of management issues currently under discussion in the Civil Budget Committee (CBC). His purpose was to make PermReps aware of these issues early. The CBC will discuss the same issues next week at an away day. The NAC will take them up again next month, in an informal setting, as it considers the 2009 - 2013 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). Topics covered include the fragile state of the current building's infrastructure (evidenced by large portions of roof that blew off the Norwegian Delegation's space in March), the ongoing "selective refit" aimed at improving public/visitor areas in the present building, the need for expanded space following the membership invitation issued to at least two new allies during the Bucharest Summit, the ongoing effort to revitalize the HQ information technology (IT) infrastructure, HQ reform (including human resource management improvements) and issues related to transitioning to a new NATO HQ building. For the 2009 - 2013 MTFP, A/SYG Dempster identified "push" (immediate impact) and "pull" (future impact of issues already on the horizon) factors that may influence the MTFP. While he did not state so explicitly, A/SYG Dempster's implication was that the budgets will have to be reconsidered. Several nations, including France and Germany, called for strict interpretation of NATO's zero real growth policy. Other nations, including the United States, Canada and The Netherlands, accepted the concept of zero real growth, but emphasized the need for

flexibility to respond to issues as they arise.

¶20. (C) Statements on Political Subjects: The Italian Deputy PermRep provided a readout of recent discussions at the United Nations on peacekeeping operations. He noted the delivery of reports on the success of sanctions against North Korea and on the progress made by UNAMIG, which will be discussed on Monday with an eye towards renewing its mandate. It was also emphasized that UNAFIL has also recently been an important topic of discussion at the UN.

¶21. (C) AOB: DCM Olson remarked on the adoption of travel restrictions on Iranian officials due to Iran's continued violation of prior UNSC resolutions regarding nuclear proliferation. He urged Allies to remain vigilant to the de facto travel ban on selected individuals.

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